



## VA Butler Healthcare Palliative Care Newsletter



### What is Palliative Care Anyway?

Palliative care is for people of any age, and any stage of illness, whether the illness is curable, chronic or life limiting. Palliative care helps restore your ability to live your life to the fullest, no matter the medical condition or the results of your medical treatment.

Chronic serious illness or general physical decline as you get older can limit your life in many ways. Physical symptoms can make it difficult to concentrate on the people and important events in your life. Worries and fears about the future can be overwhelming, leaving little energy for doing the things you used to do, even the simplest activities. Loved ones can also be affected by your condition. They may worry about what will happen to you as your health worsens or if they can no longer care for you. They may be exhausted by the care they provide you in addition their own tasks. Their own health may be affected.

Many physicians focus on providing the most effective medical treatment for your disease and sometimes can lose sight of how you are doing as a person. Palliative care professionals look at the big picture, your goals, concerns, your future needs; basically helping you plan your future. These professionals' help with the burden of illness, and its effects on you physically, emotionally,

spiritually, psychologically, and socially. Palliative care providers give you information which will give you the confidence in your ability to make informed decisions for care, treatment, and plans for the future. Palliative care medical providers concentrate on preventing or reducing distressing symptoms rather than reversing the progression of the disease. Palliative care is not dependent on prognosis, and is often offered along with curative treatment.

There is often confusion between the terms hospice and palliative care. Hospice and palliative care services share similar goals of relieving the burden of the disease which affects your loved ones and you. Palliative care is appropriate for anyone with a serious, complex, or chronic illness, whether they are expected to recover fully, live with the illness for an extended period of time, or experience rapid disease progression. Hospice care is also palliative but applies to the care provided within the last six months of life.

The VA Butler Healthcare Palliative Care Team works to provide a coordinated continuum of care for you and your family. Your quality of life is extremely important to us!



## OUR THANKS TO YOU!!

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations".

An Act approved May 13, 1938, made the 11<sup>th</sup> November in each year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day". Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation's history; after American forces "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word, "Veterans". With the approval of this legislation, November 11<sup>th</sup> became a day to honor American Veterans of all wars.



## Nuggets from Chaplain Bob

Seminary was a tough, long road but rewarding none-the-less. One afternoon, I was sitting in a Church and Society class and struggling to stay awake, when through the fog of after-lunch blahs, the professor made a statement that broke thru and got my attention. To this day, I cannot tell you the context of the lecture, but, he said, "Where you stand, determines what you see"! I had to write that down quickly before I lost class consciousness again. I put a star at the top of the quote and that tells me to look at it again later. I did go back and look at that quote, and it has made a difference in my life.

At first glance, this appeared to be a very simple statement. However, since that day in class until now, it has become rather profound. Since my seminary days, I have engaged challenges that made me stop, look and ask myself how I got where I am in the first place. Then, take time to reflect on what I see in the midst of the circumstance. What do I see? Do I see change in the wind? Do I see hope or futility? Do I see anxiety, frustration and fear? And, just like many of you, there have been times I could have given up or surrendered to the circumstances when it seemed like there was nothing I could do to change what was happening.

Now, I realize this quote may not hold the same significance for you as it has for me, but, I invite you, as Veterans and family members, to take a closer look and place that statement in your own context. Being participants in VA Butler's Healthcare Palliative Care program may seem intimidating and even ominous to you, but ask yourself what you *really* see? Yes, you are standing physically, emotionally and perhaps spiritually, at a place in life you have never been before. So, what do you see? What do you see about your circumstance? What do you realistically see about your health? What do you see about your future? Where are you spiritually? Of course, you, we ultimately must decide what lens we will choose to view the happenings around and in us. Whatever the circumstance, it is my sincere hope you will choose to live as full a life as possible.

From my Christian heritage, the word of God, invites and encourages us to "stand fast", or "by faith you stand", and even "having done all, to stand". A few more encouraging phrases are, "stand still and see", "I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living", and "Let me see your face, let me hear your voice". A few well-placed words of encouragement can make a difference in our circumstance, in our lives when we are uncertain or afraid of the unknown. After all is said and done in and about your life, ask yourself, "where do I stand, and what do I see"? I would love to hear from you so, feel free to call or come by. We will stand with you! We will stand together!





## WEBSTE OF THE QUARTER:

<http://www.caringinfo.org/> this site, associated with the National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization, is a national consumer and community site to improve care at the end of life. **The sections include;**

Planning Ahead  
Grief and Loss

Living with an Illness  
Caring for Someone

## DEFINITION OF THE QUARTER:

*Medical Power of Attorney:* A document which allows a person to appoint someone else to make decisions only about *medical care* if he/she is unable to communicate. That person may also be called, healthcare proxy, durable power of attorney for healthcare, healthcare agent, surrogate or attorney in fact. Both Pennsylvania and the VA use the terms, "Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare decisions", surrogate or proxy.

## SAFETY FIRST



The 2010 National Patient Safety Goal #8 states that medications will be reconciled across the continuum of care. Therefore it is imperative that the Veteran notifies his VA provider of any over the counter medications, herbal supplements, and outside medications prescribed by non-VA providers. In addition, the Veteran should let his provider know of any changes in his medications. The Veteran should review his current list of medications provided by the VA for accuracy and notify the provider immediately of any changes.

**Kimberly Ripper**

*Patient Safety Manager*

## HAND WASHING IS VITAL

Caring for a loved one in the home has unique challenges. Keeping them safe is always a priority. Hand hygiene is the most important way to decrease the chance of an infection. You can use either soap and water or a hand sanitizer with alcohol. When washing your hands use warm water, lather your hands covering all areas and rubbing for at least 15 seconds. Rinse thoroughly and dry with a clean towel. If using a hand sanitizer be sure to use enough to cover your hands and rub vigorously until completely dry. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommend using soap and water before you eat, after using the bathroom and if your hands are visibly dirty. You should also remember to help your loved one clean their hands appropriately.

**Sheila Howard**

*Infection Control Specialist*

## NOVEMBER IS CAREGIVERS MONTH

Family caregivers are special people and most deserving of this month of special recognition. Thank you for all you do. Caring for a loved one can be rewarding, challenging, and exhausting. It is very important that you take the time to take care of you as you provide care for your family member. To avoid "caregiver burn-out" it is important to care for your own physical, mental and emotional needs. Get enough rest and sleep. Most people need to rest 7 hours/night. Eat a healthy diet and do not rely on alcohol or drugs to reduce your stress. Get exercise by engaging in a physical activity you enjoy. Accept that there are things that are out of your control and don't attempt to control everything. Keep a positive attitude by being aware of those things you can control in your individual situation. Set realistic goals and do not try to do everything yourself. Learn to ask for help from other family members, friends, church or social groups. Assert yourself without becoming angry. Find a friend to confide in and don't keep your emotions bottled up inside. If you don't have anyone to talk to, join a caregiver support group. It can be most helpful to share with other caregivers. Listen to soothing music. Take a walk, enjoy a hobby, or watch a funny movie. Lighten up. Take some time to laugh. The time you take to care for you will benefit both you and your family member.

### Butler VA Contact Information

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Tel: (724) 287-4781

[www.butler.va.gov](http://www.butler.va.gov)

[www.visn4.va.gov](http://www.visn4.va.gov)

[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)







## The Palliative Care Consult Team

Team members are:

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You can call the toll free number:

**1-800-362-8262** and dial the last 4 digits of the phone number or dial 0 and ask for the person for whom you want to speak



<http://www.facebook.com/VAButlerPA>



<http://twitter.com/VAButlerPA>

## Find the following hidden words:

Palliative, chaplain, social worker, psychologist, nurse, nurseaide, coordinator, physician, Caregiver, family

## WORD SEARCH

S E C I G A G P C H C R W R G I  
E A S S O C I A L W O R K E R E  
T O S F V A B L E N O T I H E N  
M K X F D D C L A W R T T F S R  
E C H A P L A I N W D I L F O Z  
S G P F E E C A J D I Y E S Z R  
H B R Q R I G T A C N L I Z S G  
S C X S S S I I T N A P C O S B  
C S R Y U E C V B T T O A C O O  
H O H R E S L E I Q O Z R O H E  
N P C S X S O W W F R Y E I C I  
R L I A P S Y C H O L O G I S T  
N U R S E A I D E I R R I N C E  
O R R H T C J E M W B O V F N H  
E S S L T S A L M M I E O N N A  
B M Q V D C F J S W N U R S E N

**Do you know a veteran that needs our services?**



**1-800-362-8262**

**Welcome to Seasons of Life,**  
your palliative care newsletter.

We want to introduce you to our palliative care consult team and keep you informed of help available to you, our honored veteran. Our team includes your PCP, the palliative care coordinator, nurses, social workers, psychologist, chaplain, and representatives from our home care program, adult day health care program and respite care program.

## SERVICE AREA

